

The following is claimed:

1. A method for evaluating near-term suicidal risk by analysis of a series of spoken words, comprising the steps of:

- a. converting the spoken series of words into a signal having time varying amplitude indicative of energy content of said words as spoken;
- b. dynamically monitoring said signal to detect changes in energy content of said words as spoken;
- c. identifying the person as having a relatively high near-term risk of suicide if detected reduction in energy content of said series of words over the course of speaking of the same exceeds that occurring in the speech of individuals in good mental health having no near-term suicidal risk.

2. A method for evaluating near-term suicidal risk by analysis of a series of spoken words, comprising the steps of:

- a) converting the spoken series of words into a signal having discrete time varying amplitudes indicative of energy content of said words as spoken;
- b) dynamically monitoring said signal to detect commencement of said words of said series and energy content thereof;
- c) identifying the speaker as having a relatively high near-term risk of suicide if detected energy content of said words and frequency of commencement of said words are both lower, by predetermined amounts, than the occurrence of the same in the speech of individuals in good mental health having no near-term suicidal risk.

3. A method for evaluating near-term suicidal risk by analysis of a series of spoken words, comprising the steps of:

- d) converting the spoken series of words into respective signals having time varying frequency;
- e) monitoring said signals to measure time varying frequency at the commencement of respective ones thereof;
- f) identifying the person as having relatively high near-term suicidal risk if measured time varying frequency at word commencement varies by less than a predetermined amount than in the speech of individuals in good mental health having no near-term suicidal risk.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said monitoring step includes:

- g) monitoring said signals to measure time variations in fundamental frequency at the commencement of respective ones thereof;
- h) and wherein said identifying step further comprises:
- i) identifying the person as having relatively high near-term suicidal risk if measured word commencement time varying fundamental frequency varies less than a predetermined amount than in the speech of individuals in good mental health having no near-term suicidal risk.

5. A method for evaluating near-term suicidal risk by analysis of a series of spoken words, comprising the steps of:

- j) converting the spoken series of words into a signal having time varying frequency;

- k) dynamically monitoring said signal to measure time varying frequency thereof and computing an average value of the same;
- l) identifying the person as having relatively high near-term suicidal risk if measured average time varying frequency of said signal is lower by a predetermined amount than in the speech of individuals in good mental health having no near-term suicidal risk.

6. A method for evaluating near-term suicidal risk by analysis of spoken words, comprising the steps of:

- m) converting the spoken words into a signal indicative of the syntactic structure thereof;
- n) comparing the syntactic structure represented by said signal with known patterns of accepted syntax to identify whether some or all of the syntax of said spoken words fits a grammatically accepted pattern;
- o) comparing initial amplitude of a spoken word identified as fitting said grammatically accepted pattern with amplitude(s) of preceding and succeeding contiguous words spoken by said person;
- p) identifying the person as having a relatively high near-term risk of suicide if said initial amplitude of said spoken word exceeds amplitude of said preceding and/or succeeding contiguous words by more than a preselected amount based on speech of individuals in good mental health having no near-term suicidal risk.

7. The method of claim wherein said words constitute a series of spoken words.

8. The method of claim wherein said signal is an electrical sign.

9. A method for evaluating near-term suicidal risk by analysis of series of spoken words by an emotionally agitated and/or depressed person, comprising the steps of:

- q) converting spoken series of words into a signal indicative of the amplitude thereof;
- r) repeatedly dynamically monitoring said amplitude represented by said signal to detect amplitude increases over the course of several words followed by a return to the amplitude level prior to the detected amplitude increase to define a dynamic amplitude pattern;
- s) identifying the person as having a relatively high near-term risk of suicide if dynamic amplitude pattern differs by more than a preselected amount from the dynamic amplitude patterns of individuals in good mental health having no near-term suicidal risk.

10. A method for evaluating near-term suicidal risk by analysis of a series of spoken words, comprising the steps of:

- t) converting the spoken series of words into a signal indicative of the rhythmic structure thereof;
- u) dynamically monitoring said signal to detect changes in the rhythm of the speech of said person followed by a return to the determined rhythmic structure;
- v) identifying the person as having a relatively high near-term risk of suicide if detected changes in speech rhythm of the person repeatedly occur more often than in speech of individuals in good mental health having no near-term suicidal

risk.

11. A method for evaluating near-term suicidal risk by analysis of a series of spoken words, comprising the steps of:

- w) converting the spoken series of words into a signal having time varying amplitude indicative of energy content of said words as spoken;
- x) dynamically monitoring said signal to detect changes in energy content of said words as spoken;
- y) identifying the person as having a relatively high near-term risk of suicide if the combination of detected intonal increase in energy content and terminal decrease in energy content of said words exceeds that occurring in the speech of individuals in good mental health having no near-term suicidal risk.

12. A method of any of claims 1 through 11 further comprising the steps of :

- z) dynamically monitoring said signal to detect presence therein of parameters conventionally indicating anxiety in the speaker;
- aa) identifying the person as having a relatively high near-term risk of suicide in the absence of such parameters from such signal thereby indicating lack of speaker anxiety